A Sermon of the chylde Jesus made by the moſt famous clerke Doctour Erasmus of Roterdã.

¶ To be pronoũced and preached of a chylde vnto chyldren.


BRITISH MUSEUM

¶ A sermon of the chylde Jesus made by Erasmus to be pronounced and preached of a chylde vnto chyldren.

A chylde goynge about to speake before chyldren of the inestable chylde Jesus wyll not wyshe the eloquence of Tullie / whiche myghte stryke the eares with shorte and vayne pleasure / for how much Cristes wysdom is in dystaunce from the wysdom of the worlde (the dystaunce is vnmeasurable) so much ought the christen eloquence dyffere frō the eloquence of the worlde. But this I wolde ye myght with bremynge vowes optayne with me of god so good a father of the good chyld from [illegible] fountayne of sprynged the chyef [illegible] / which onely wyll [illegible] maketh y^t [illegible] and eloquent / [illegible]

lyke prayse / that lykewyse as our holy lyfe ought to expresse none other than the spirite Jesus Christ (of whom this daye we do entende to speake) so lykewyse this our sermon maye sauer on hym / represent hym / breath hym / whiche is both the worde of the father and hath all onely the wordes of lyfe / whose lyuely and worckynge speche is more percyng then any .ii. edged swerd percynge to the very inwarde chaumbers of the herte. And y^t he / from whose body flodes of lyuyng water do renne / wyll vouche saue by the instrument of my voyce as it were by the pype of a cõduyt to flowe into the myndes of all you / with the plenteous moysture of the heuenly grace to water them. This thynge so I truste shall come to passe (most derely beloued felows) if we wyll ioyne to the godly requestes / cares which be purged and trust[illegible] thurlyng. That is to say such cares as that eternall worde requyryng in the gospell of sayncte Matthew the .xi. Chapitre sayth. Qui habet aures ad audiendum audiat / that is to say

☞ who hath eares to the entente to heare / let hym heare. But as touchyng me / why may I not be bold to enterpryse this thynge harde I wyll not denye / but yet godly / namely god hym selfe beynge my ayder and helper / in whome the lesse mans infirmyte trusteth in his owne powers the more able it shalbe / and in whome Paule bosteth that he can do all thynges. Moreouer syth these persons do brenne with such feruent zele and affection whiche haue wedded and appoynted themselues to the warfare of this worlde / that is to saye / of the deuyll that eche one of them shulde extolle / auaunce / and magnifie theyr captayne with all the solempnitie of prayse that can be ymagyned / howe muche better and souer ought we to magnifie euen auye who can do best with deuout hymnys and commendations our mayster / redemer / & captayne Jesus / and the same also the prynce of all in generall / but of vs chyldren in especial: Hym fyrst & principaly to know let vs studie / knowen let vs prayse / praysed let vs loue / loued let vs expresse expressed let vs counterfet / counterfet-

synge lette vs enioye / enioynge let vs take immortal felicite. But in so plen-tyfull & so vnmeasurable coppe of thyn-ges from whens shal we take a begyn-nyng of our sermon / or where shall we fynde an ende? Syth he of whome we entēde to entreate is the very foūtayne or (to speake more truely) the occean see of all goodnes and good thynges. But as he hymselfe of nature incom-prehensible and infinyte / yet was con-tented to compasse and dryue his owne selfe (as who saythe) into a streyght. So lykewyse our sermon in expoun-dynge his prayses which be of them-selfes vnmeasurable / must of necessyte put a measure to it selfe. Verely I see that there be thre thynges principally whiche be wont to kyndle and enflame the hertes eyther of scolers or of soul-dyours to w valiauntly and manly/the fyrste is to be brought in to an admira-cyon of theyr guyde or captayne/the secounde to loue hym/the thyrd the re-warde. wherfore to thentent we myght with more feruent and cherefull cour-ages obey our master and captayne Je-sus/go we to. Let vs consyder seuerally

all these

al thēse thre thynges with a deuout cu-
riosite in hym. Fyrste of all howe won-
derfull he is on euery syde and to be as-
toyned at. After that howe greatly he
is to be loued and for that cause also to
be folowed. And last of all what hyghe
profyte/frute/and auauntage shall ar-
yse vnto vs by this loue. Nowe/it is
the vsage of Rhetoriciās in this kynd
of oration to shewe ensamples of noble
prynces/to this purpose and entēt that
by the comparyson of hym whom they
prayse with other/his nobles and ver-
tues myght appere the greater. But
our captayne so greatly and wonder-
fully surmounteth all the heyth of hu-
mane dignite/and hyghnes that whō
soeuer a mā sheweth be he neuer so wor
thy excellent and hygh/yet he shal seme
to adde darkenes and not lyght. For
whose progenye and noblenes shall not
seme smoke if thou cōparest hym with
Jesu/whiche by an vnspeakable/nay
with an vnthynkable reason is borne
god of god alwaye without tyme egall
in all thynges to his eternall and most
hyghe parent. Howbe it though we
go no further than to his humane na-

tiuitie / I pray you do it not easyly cu-
shadowe and obscure the clearnes of al
other kynges & prynces in the worlde:
as he whiche wonderfully aboue the
course of nature / his father of heuen
beyng the worker and authour / the ho-
ly ghoste breathyng / the aungel beyng
the massanger / without mans industrie
was borne a virgyne / of a virgyne be-
ynge pregnant and with chylde by the
handworke of the heuenly father / and
was borne a man / and in tyme. And a-
gayne was so borne a man that nother
he lefte to be god / nor yet he drew none
of our fylthynes vnto hym at all. Now
syr what can be ymagyned more am-
ple than he whiche beynge infounded
through all / yet restreyned in no place
abydeth in hymselfe vncompassable &
vnmeasurable: what is more ryche
than he which is the very chyef & prin-
cipall goodnes / from whome all good
thynges do issue / and yet he is not ther-
by dyminyshed: what is more renou-
med than he whiche is the renoume of
his fathers glorie / and whiche onely
lyghteth euery man commynge into
this worlde: what is more mygh-

than

than he to whome the father almyghty hath gyuen all power in heuen and in earthe? what is of more force than he whiche with a symple becke made all / at whose commaundement the see falleth / the shappes of thynges be turned / the dyseases flee / the armed fall downe / the deuyls are dryuen awaye / the elementes obey / the rockes of stone are cutte in sonder / the dead ware alyue agayne / the synners be conuerted / fynally all thynges be made new? who is of wyder imperye then he / whiche they in heuen magnifie / they in helle tremble at / this myddle worlde humbly worshyppeth / to the comparyson of whome / the moste haut and hygh kynges confesse themselues to be but wretched wormes? what is stronger and more victorious than he whiche alone / death whiche was to all other inuincible ouercam with his owne death / and whiche layd downe and abated the tyrannye of Satan by his heuenly prowes and vertue?

what is more triumphaunt than he whiche breakynge and spoylynge helle accompaynyed with so manye godly

soules lyke a valiant conquerour ascended vp to heuen and there sytteth at the ryght syde of his father: what is wyser than he which with so wonderfull reason created al thynges that euen in the very lytle bees he hath lefte so many & so greate miracles of his wysdom: and which with so wonderful ordre of thynges and harmonye knytteth / conteyneth / admynistreth all whiche goyth rounde about all and yet departeth not from hymselfe mouyng all / beyng hymselfe vnmoued / shakyng all / hymselfe quyet / fynally yᵗ which is most folysche in hym / passeth by longe dystaunce the hole wysdom of the wyse men of the world / whose authorite ought so much the more be the greatter vnto vs / that the father hymselfe openly wytnesseth of hym-saynge / ☞ here is my welbeloued sonne in whome is my pleasaunce / harken to hym. what is so reuerend as he to whose eyes all thynges be open: what is so to be drad as he which with his only becke can sende both soule and bodye into hell. what is more beautyfull than he whose countenaunce to beholde is the hygh ioy: Fynally if many thynges be had precious for the antiquitie /

quitie: what is more auncient than he which neyther had begynnyng nor shal haue endyng: But it were perchaunce more conuenient that chyldern shulde wonder at the chyld/for here also he appereth wonderfull in so much that the lowest of hym is more hygh than those thynges which be moste hygh in men. Howe great was he whom beyng but a babe cryeng wrapped in cloutes caste lyke an abiecte thyng in the crybbe/yet the aungels from heuen magnifie with theyr songe/the shepbardes worshyp/ yea she that bare hym worshyppeth/the brute beastes acknowledge/the sterre sheweth/the wyse astronomers reuerence/kynge Herode feareth/all Hierusalem tremble at/holy Symeon embraceth/Anna prophesieth the well disposed people are brought in to hope of saluation. Oh the low hyghnes & hygh lownes. If we wonder at new thynges what lyke thyng was euer outher one or herde/or thought: If we marueyle at greate thynges/what can be by all maner of meanes more ample than our Jesus whome no creature can outher expresse with the voyce/or conceyue

with

with thought / whose greatnes who wyll compasse with wordes / he doth much folysher than if he went about to draw vp the wyde occean see with a lytle dysch/his immensytie is rather to be worshypped than expounded/at which we ought so much the more to wonder that we can not attayne it/& why shulde we not so worsyth that great pursuaũt Johan Baptist pronounceth hymselfe vnworthy to vnlose the latchettes of his shoes? Go ye to/then swete chyldre let vs glorie with an holy pryde in this so noble a chylde Jesus our mayster/in this so worthy a captayn/let his hyghnes encourage vs to enterpryse deuoutly / in hym onely let vs please our selfes that thynkyng all that is his to be common to vs all/we may iudge and counte our selfes better than (beyuge ones addicte to suche a captayne) to serue the world or vices/so vyle & fylthy masters

¶ The secounde part.

But the deuyls do wonder & also tremble at hym / onely good men loueth hym / wherfore the other parte of this sermon as it goeth more nyghe vnto vs / so it is to be herde with more

atten-

attentyfe eares that is to wyte for how
many causes Jesus is to beloued of vs/
nay to be reloued rather/for he loued vs
not yet created before all tyme in hym
selfe in whom euen than were all thyn-
ges. And therfore by his natyur goods-
nes whan we were nought / he formed
vs / and he formed vs / not any maner
beste / but man / and he formed to his
owne lykenes / that is to wyte / receyua
ble of the hyghe ioy and with the holy
breath of his mouth he dyd put into vs
the breath of lyfe. Beslyde this all other
beastes and fowles commaunded to be
obedyent at our cõmaundement / more
ouer the aungels appoynted out to pro
tecte and defende vs / he assygned and
gaue all this moste wyde and goodly
buyldyng of the worlde to our vses and
behoues / in whiche he hath set vs in a
certayne wonderfull stage to the entens
that in the thynges created we myght
wonder vpon the wysdom of the maker
loue the goodnes / haue in reuerence
and veneration the power / and that
we myght the more do thus / he hathe
furnyshed vs with so many helpes of
senses / and hath garnyshed vs with
so ma

so many good qualities of mynde and hath decked vs with so bryght & quycke lyght of wytte. what can be ymagyned outher / more wonderfull / or happyer / than this creature? But oh cursed enuye alway the compaygnion of welth / agayne by the subtyltie of the serpent he fell wretchedly into synne that is to wyte into worse thā naught. But here agayne thou oh good Jesu with what vnspecable puidēce / with what vnherd an example / with what incomparable charite haste thou restored that worke y^t thou dydest create? for on suche wyse thou dydest restore it y^t i maner it auayled them that they felle / and this saute there is one person whiche not without cause calleth it an happy saute we were / al y^t myght be / bound to hym that created vs / but to hym that repared vs we owe more than all. wylfully thou keste thy selfe downe from the kyngdō of the father into this our exile to the entente thou myghtest make vs which were before banysshed and dryuen out of paradyse the cytyzens of heuen / thou tokest vpon the our humanite to call vs to the felowshyp of thy diuinitye / thou dydest

put

put vpon the this our fyme to the entent thou myghtest cladde vs with the glorie of immortalitie/beynge couered in our shappe / thou woldest lyue many yeres with vs in this wretched worlde that thou myght bryng vs yea thus in to the loue of the/naked thou crepst vp into this lyght nay nyght rather/with vs nay for vs thou dydst crye lyke a babe/thou dydst hũgre/thurst/suffer heate cold/labour/werynes/neade/watchyng fastynge/and to so many euyls of ours thou woldeste be thrall / to the entente thou shuldest bryng vs exempted from all euyls into the communion of the / that is to say of the bygh ioy. Furthermore through out al the hole proces of thy most holy lyfe with how lyuely ensamples doyst thou enflame our hertes: with how holsom preceptes doyst thou nourture and forme vs: with how wonderfull miracles doyste thou awaken vs: with howe fayre monitions doyste thou drawe vs: with how sure promisses doyst thou inuyte: so that there is none more cõmodious way to the than by thy owne selfe whiche onely art the waye/the trouth/ & lyfe. But thou hast

not

not onely shewd the way/but also thou
hast opened it whyle thou wouldest for
vs be bounde/drawē/damned/skorned/
whypped/bespytted/be bete/be rcupled
and at laste also vpon the rode of the
crosse/lyke a lambe without spotte be
offered/that by thy bondes thou myght-
test losen vs/by thy woundes heale vs/
with thy bloud wesh vs/with thy death
bynge vs to immortalite. Brefly thou
bestowedst thyselfe holly vpon vs/that
by the losse of the (if it were possyble)
thou myght saue vs whiche were lost/
when thou wert restored agayne to lyfe
thou apearedst so often to thy disciples/
and in theyr syght bydest stye vp to he-
uen that they myght trust to com thy-
ther where they sawe theyr hede to haue
gone before them. This wne to the en-
tent thou myghtest yet more confirme
thy frendes/thy father pacified/thou
bydest sende that noble pledge of thy
perpetuall loue/the holy ghoste/that
dead to the worlde we myght lyue now
in the farre more truely and blessedly
than we lyue by this our owne spirite.
I beseche you/what can be added to
these proues of hygh charite. For these
so ma-

so many and so greate coulde not satys-
fye thy most brennyng loue toward vs.
For who can reherse with howe many
deathes of martyrs thou doyst encou-
rage vs to despyse this worlde: with
how many ensamples of virgyns wyst
thou kyndle vs to chastitie: with howe
many monumentes of sayncters doyst
thou attyse vs to deuoutnes of mynde:
with how wonderful sacramētes of thy
churche doyst thou fortifie and enryche
vs: howe doyst thou comforte/lefte vp/
arme/teache/monyshe/drawe/rauyshe/
chaunge/transforme vs with thy my-
sticall and diuyne wrytynges/in which
thou woldest certayne lyuyshe sparkes
of the to be hydde / whiche myght styre
vs a greate enkyndlyng of loue/who
so laboreth to dryue them out with a de
uout dyligence. Fynally howe art thou
euery where in our waye/to the entent
we myght not forgette the/beside this
how fatherly doyst thou suffre vs when
we synne: How mercyfully doyst thou
receyue vs when we retourne: Nor
thou doyste not impute thy good dedes
for them that be kynde / nor our euyll
dedes thou doyst not lay agaynste vs/

whan we repente / howe euer amonge
wyll thou pluckest vs and drawe vs with
secrete instinctions: how doyste thou a-
mende and chastyse vs by aduersitees:
howe entysest vs by prosperities: howe
moueste thou euery stone sekeste euery
way to the wode: thy most ardent cha-
rite neuer nor no where ceasing in cōfor
tyng/reuengyng/defendyng & makyng
vs blessed: But what a few thynges of
so innumerable haue I reherced (o gen-
tyl compaygnyons) and yet ye se what
vnmesurable an hepe of benefites it is:
So now/who lusteth and let hym ma-
gnyfie Pylades / Orestes/Pyrithoos/
Theseus / Damon/ and Pythias with
paynted wordes/whiche be all but ry-
fuls to these. And all these benefytes
hath he gyuen frely / of his owne mere
motion/to vs/ which haue nothyng de-
serued them / nay whan we were ren-
weys / traytours/ and ennemyes / and
whiche coulde do hym no pleasure a-
gayne. If with meane kyndnesses men
be kyndeled to loue a man / shall we not
at leste waye reloue our creatour / rede-
mer so louyng/so kynde: for he requy-
reth none other amendes of vs/ whiche

he

he also powreth agayne to our lucre. The adamante meiteth with gootes mylke / egyls / lyons / leopardes / dolphyns / dragons knowlege and requyte kyndnes / and oh the hardnes of mans herte harder than the adamant / if it meiteth not by suche kyndnes whiche hath not be herde of. O ingratitude / more vnkynde than wylde beastes / if it can forgette so greate deseruynges. O notorious vnshamefastnes / nay madnes rather / if so created so restored / so enryched / oppreest with so great kyndnes / called to so greate hopes can loue any thynge saue onely hym / in whome and from whome be all / and whiche gyueth vs parte with hym of all thynges. And although euery mortall creature taketh these commodities / yet we especially be bound vnto hym / because that by many probations he hath declared hymselfe to be of a syngular tenderues and fauour towarde our ordre / I meane towarde vs chyldren. Fyrste that (as he was promysed by the sayinges of prophetes) it pleased hym to be borne a yong chyld where as in dede he was without all measure & quantitie.

Moreouer that yet closed in the deene of the virgynes wombe he reioysed to be saluted with the sprynggynge and leppyng of an infaũt also not yet borne. Beside this that forthwith he wolde his natiuitye to be halowed with the bloud of innocent chyldrẽ/so that with these lyght harnysed souldyers (as I myght saye) the most inuycte captayne myght begynne his batell. To this maye be added that / his tryumphale deathe approchynge/he commynge to Hierusalem wolde be gloriously receyued with the procession / metynge and louyng kyndnes of chyldrẽ rather then of men/and wolde haue his prayses to be songe and proclamed with the swete voyces of chyldren. Nowe spr/how louyng and bulye a defendour & proctour was he of chyldrẽ which whan the mothers offered theyr chyldren vnto hym that they myght be blessed by touching of hym / he beyng discontẽted with his disciples that they wolde not suffre thẽ to come vnto hym/sayd. Let the babes come vnto me. Nor he dyd not onely bysse them/but also he sayd that nomẽ myght come to heuen that wolde not hum-

humble hymselfe accordyng to ye yong babes. Agayne howe louyngly dyd he also when he so sore frayeth men from offendynge his lytle ones sayng / it were better for a man to haue a mylstone henge aboute his necke & be caste into the see / than that he shulde greue one of these babes / and to these wordes marke what a goodly addicyon he made in cõmendacyon of chyldrē: ☞ Truely I say vnto you theyr aungels do alwayes see the face of the father. O good maister Jesus thy lytle flocke whiche is offered vnto the / gyue thankes vnto the / whome I beseche that thou wylt vouchsaue alwayes to lay thy holy handes vpon them / and defende them from all greuaunce. And is not this also a great token of loue when he dyd set a chylde in myddes of his disciples to be an example for them to folowe / sayng. Nisi conuersi fueritis & efficiamini sicut parvulus iste, non intrabitis in regnū cœlorum. Onles ye be cõuerted and be made as this babe is / ye shall not entre into the kyngdom of heuen. Hytherto also belongeth that whan Nicodemus demaūded of Christe by what waye he myght

come to euerlastyng blysse/he demaun-
ded hym to be borne agayne / that is to
wyte/to come agayne into a chylde. Lo
so greatly infauncy pleaseth Christ our
captayne/yᵗ he enforceth also the aged
men to waxe chyldren agayne / if they
wyll be receyued into his compaygnye
besyde whome there is no hope of sal-
uation. Nor S. Peter doth not disa-
gree from his mayster Christe / where
as he aduertiseth vs as newe borne
chyldren to couet mylke. Nor holy
Paule dysaccordeth not / saynge.
Filioli mei quos iterum parturio donec for-
metur Christus in vobis. O my lytle chyl-
dren / ye Paule / whome I agayne do
beare and bryng forth/lyke the woman
lyenge in chyldbed/whyle Christ be for-
med in you. The same Paule gyueth
his lytle babes (for so he calleth them)
mylke to fede on / in Christe. There be
ryght many suche sorte of places in the
mysticall and holy scriptures. Gene-
rally and at one worde to speake the
thynge / Christianitie is none other
thynge in the worlde / but a certayne

newe

newe byrth whiche in the Byble is cal-
led a regeneration / and that is none
other thynge saue a beynge a chylde
agayn. Greate is than the mysterie of
a chyld / great is the mysterie of chyld-
hode / wherin Jesus so greately was
delyted. Let not vs then despyse our
age whiche that true prayseur and es-
temer of thynges hath made so muche
of. Onely this one thynge / lette vs
gyue our deuour / that we may be suche
chyldren as Jesus loueth / surely he lo-
ueth innocent and harmelesse chyldren
redy / & apte to learne / and symple. And
let vs also remembre this thynge / that
this chyldhode so greatly and so derely
beloued of Christe lyeth not in peces /
but in myndes / it consysteth not in ty-
mes but in maners. For there is a cer-
tayne kynde and sorte of chyldren /
which is cleane ouertwart / and great-
ly to be fledde of vs / whiche haue
smothe cyннes and roughe myndes /
chyldren and berdles in age / but olde
in wityous sleyght / sotcelte / and mys-
cheyfe.

wherfore there is also a certayne newe kynde of chyldehode whiche is alowed of Christ a chyldhode without chyldysshenes/and generally to speake) a certayne aged chyldehode/which standeth not in the noumbre of yeres but in innocentie and simplycitye of wytte/wch not peter openly shewe the same when he sayth. Deponentes igitur omnem maliciam/& omnem dolum/& simulationes/& inuidias/& detractiones/sicut modo geniti infantes/rationabile/& sine dolo lac concupiscite/vt in eo crescatis in salutem. That is to say/wherfore layng a parte all malyce/& all wyle/& hypocrisies/and enuyes/and backebytynges/as newe gotten infantes/reasonable/& without gyle couet ye mylke/that by it ye maye encrease into saluation. why added he reasonable: truely because he wolde exclude fowlysshnes which customably is wont cõmonly to be the compaygnyon of this age. why doth he contracte and take awaye enuyes/simulations/and the other vices/whiche especyally raygne in olde men: surely to the entẽt we shulde vnderstand that the chyldren of Christ be esteemed by theyr simplicite

and

and puretie / and not by theyr byrth. And in lyke wyse S. Paule also sayth. Malicia paruuli estote, sensibus aũt perfecti. In malice (sayth he) be babes / but in wytte be ye perfecte / howbe it there is vniuersally in the very age of chyldē a certayne natyue & naturall goodnes / and as it were a certayne shadowe & ymage of innocencye or a hope rather and dysposition of a goodnes to come. A softe mynde and pliable to euery behauour / shamefastnes which is a good kepar of innocencie / a wytte voyde of vyces / bryghtnes of bodye / and as it were a flower of a flozyshyng worlde / and (I can not tell how) a certayne thyng alye and familiare to spirites. For it is not for naught that as ofte as the aungels appeare with thy shewe themselfes in chylderns lykenes / yea mozeouer they that vse art magicke whan so euer they fetch vp spirites with theyr enchauntmentes (as men say) they be called vp in lykenesse of a bodely chylde / but howe muche moze gladly wyll that heuenly spirite called vpon with deuout and holy vowes enter into suche mansions: wherfore to these gyftes of nature if

imitation of that hyghe and absolute
chylde be caste vnto/ then fynally shall
chyldrē leme louyng & kynde towardes
hym & also worthy & fytte for hym / for
the chylde that so prouoketh / who can
not but loue / vndowtedly suche is the
vertue and violent operation of true
loue / that thou wylt coueit to be so lyke
(as may be possyble) vnto the thynge
which thou louest/ wyche thyng if hu-
mayne loue worketh in vs/ what zele of
folowynge shall diuyne loue kyndle/ to
which the other compared/ is vnneth a
lytle shadowe of loue / wherfore if true-
ly and with herte/ not with onely wor-
des we loue Jesus / let vs endeuer for
our power to expresse Jesus / or rather
to be transformed into hym. And if we
can not folowe the man/ let vs chyldren
folowe the chylde/ howbeit this is no
chyldes fete / yea it passeth the powers
of aged ylons/ but it is a thyng which
in maner neuer chaāgeth more happely
than in chyldrē/ for so oft as the matter
depende on mans helpe/ theyr strenght/
age / the distinction of male & female is
pondered & cōsydered/ but where ye mat
ter stādeth in grace/ not in nature/ there
spirite sheweth his wonderfull worke/

so much ye more that there is but lytle helpe & trust in the flesshe. Finally what doubt we or distruste / syth he hymselfe formeth / fashoneth / & transformeth vs / who we endeuour to expresse: who added so great prudence to the chylde Daniel: who to the chyld Salomō gaue so great wysdō: who to tho. iii. chyldren ioyned so great pacience: who made child Hely worthy to com to goddes speach: who to chylde Nicholas / to Sylys / to Benet / to Agnes / to Cesyly / to so many so tender virgyns gaue so manly & inuincible vertue: Truely not nature but grace / & where nature lesse helpeth / there more wōderfully worketh grace / Wherfore bearing ourselfes bold of this grace / let vs with a great hert and stomacke enterpryse ye studie to folow ye chylde Jesus / & let vs neuer moue our eyes from hym beynge (as who shulde saye) our marke. we haue a perfyte and an absolute exemplar / there is nothyng els where / to be sokte. All his lyf cōtinually cryeth what we ought to do. For what teacheth vs that moste pure chylde that he was borne of a moste pure virgyne: but to eschue all fylthe and defowlementes of this worlde /

imitation of that hyghe and absolute
chylde be caste vnto/ then fynally shall
chyldrē seme louyng & kynde towardes
hym & also worthy & fytte for hym / for
the chylde that so prouoketh / who can
not but loue: vndowtedly suche is the
vertue and violent operation of true
loue / that thou wylt coueit to be so lyke
(as may be possyble) vnto the thynge
which thou loueste/ whiche thyng if hu-
mayne loue worketh in vs / what zele of
folowynge shall diuyne loue kyndle / to
which the other compared/ is vnneth a
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And to meditate a certayne angelycall lyfe euen nowe in erthe that is / to meditate that here / which there we shalbe contynually. Truely the spirite of Jesu generally abhorreth and hateth all fylthynes but specyally that beastly luste and vtterly vnworthy for man. what taught he vs in that he was borne frō home in another countre / delyuered of his mother in a vyle cotage / cast downe in a cribbe / wrapped aboute with vyle cloutes: but that we shulde alwaye remembre that we be here straungers for a fewe dayes / and that all ryches troden vnder fete and the false honours of the worlde despyseth we shulde haste vs beynge as lyght and lose as maye be to our heuenly countre through vertuose labours / in which our heuenly and natyue countre we ought alredy to lyue in mynde although we touche as yet the erthe with our corporall fete. Agayne what monyshed he vs in that he fledde into Egypt / but that by all meanes we shulde eschue to entermedle with contagious people whiche labour to put out Christ in vs (that is to wyte) innocencye / and the despysyng of the worlde:

wyat

what taught he vs that he was circumcised / but that we shulde cut of all carnall affections whiche disturbe vs hastyng vnto Christe/& that beynge dead as it were in our owne selues be led and nourysshed onely with the spirite of Jesu: what taught he vs in that he was offered vp in the temple / but that we shulde holly offer vp and dedicate our selues euen from our infauncie to god and to holy thinges/and forthwith the vessell of our mynde beynge yet newe and freshe drynke into vs Jesu / for no age is vnmeete to learne holynes / naye rather none other age is more tymely and mete to learne Christe / than that whiche knoweth not yet the worlde. Nowe consyder ye with our selues (oh chyldren) with howe holy studyes and occupacyons that same chylde so borne so offered vp to god dyd passe our his chyldhode. Not with ydelnes/not with eatynge and drynkyng/not with slepe/ not with vayne sportes and playes/not with folysshe fables/not with strayn-ges abrode/as the common sort of chyldren are wont to do / but outher with mynystryng and seruyng his parentes/

or with holy prayers / or hearynge the preachers and teachers / or with deuout meditations or with holy and arnest communications with other chyldren / hath not sayntc Luke in his gospell compryſed breſly all theſe and many other lyke / when he wryteth in this maner. Puer creſcebat & confortabatur plenus ſapientia, & gratia dei erat in illo. That is to ſay. The chylde grewe and wered ſtronge / full of wyſdom / and the grace of god was in hym. Do ye not manifeſtly ſee a newe kynde of chyldehode. Of the chyldren in tymes paſte it was ſayd. Stulticia colligata eſt in corde pueri. That is to ſaye. Foly is teyed together in a chyldes herte. Of the newe chylde ye here. Plenus ſapientia full of wyſdom / why do we any longer excuſe our rudenes vnder the cloke of our tender age / when we heare a chyld not onely wyſe but full of wyſdom? Se howe this chylde hathe inuerted all order of thinges which ſayth in the Apocalyps Ecce ego noua facio omnia / that is to ſaye. Lo I make all newe. The wyſdom of the aged is deſtroyed / and the

prudence

prudence of the prudent is dysalowed/ and chyldren be replenyshed with wysdom. And for this very cause he gyueth thankes to his father/saynge. Quoniam absondisti hæc a sapientibus & renelasti ea parunlis. because thou haste hydde these from wyse/ and hast dysclosed them to infauntes. But leste we shulde here coucite and studye for the folysshe and deceptfull wysdom of this worlde he adderh forthwith. Et gratia dei erat ī illo The grace of god was in hym. He whan all is done is the wyse man and hathe the ryghte knowledge/ whiche to the worlde is but a fole/ and whiche sauereth nothynge but Christe. He is knowen not by the bokes of the philosophers/ nor yet by subtyll and sophistycall argumentes/ but by pure faythe he is knowen/ by hope he is holden/ by charitie he is wonne. Howe manye thynges hathe this chylde taught by his ensample: when he was but .xii. yeres of age he stale awaye preucly frō his parentes/ whiche coulde not be founde neyther among his kynsfolke/

nor among his acquayntaunce / at last was founde after the space of .iii. dayes. But wheare I beseche you was he founde? In fayres / in markettes / in ways / i taucens daunsyng or syngings? Harken ye chyldren where the chylde Jesus was founde / leuyng his frendes and in maner a fugityue & a renawaye / and ye shall easyly vnderstande where ye ought to be conuersaunt. In the temple (I saye) he was founde syttynge in the myddes of the doctours hearynge theyr reasons / and demaundynge questiõs of them. what hath Jesus taught vs by these so wonderfull deades? No doubt but that he hath taught vs some great thynge / som earneste matter / and to be byghly folowed / & what is that? Surely that whyle Christ ware bygge in vs (for he is also borne in vs / & hath his degrees of ages / vntyl he growe vp to a stronge and perfet man / and into the measure of his fulnes) wherfore whyle (I say) he ware bygge in vs / he teacheth vs to transferre and shyft our naturall affections whiche be towarde our parentes and other frendes vpon god / nothyng to loue here / nothyng to

magni-

magnifie but in Christe? Christ in all/ let vs remembre that we haue our true father/countre/kynsfolke and frendes in heuen. But lest a man wold ymagyn with this neglectyng of parentes shuld sauer any pryde or disobediencie/ it fo= lloweth. Et erat subditus illis. And he was subiet vnto them/nay rather none more truely loueth his parentes/ none more naturally honoreth them/ none obeyeth them more obsequiously/ than he which thus cõtemneth them. what is it to sytte in the temple/but to rest in holy thynges/ and to bryngе a mynde to learne/quyet from al worldly cares. Nothyngе is more turbulent than vy= ces/and agaynе wysdom loueth layser and quyetnes. Now/of what any per= son shall we disdayne to learne/howe at= tentyfe cares ought we to gyue to our maysters/whan that heuenly chyld Je sus the wysdom of god his father/ syt= teth in myddes of the doctours/ hea= rynge and agaynе demaundyng of them and aunswerynge/but so aunswerynge that all wondred on his wysdom? Nor no wonder syth he was suche one/ to whome all the wysdom of the world is

folyche. The knowledge of lawes is a goodly thyng/the science of philosophie is a noble thyng/the profession of diuynitie is a thynge bygbly to be magnified. But who heareth Jesus / forthwith all thynge ware folyche / but our aunswer though it can not stycke a myracle of wysdom at lest way let it sauer of sobernes and discretion / let it sauer innocencie. Agayn I beseeche you how obeysaunt / how seruyable becommeth it vs to be to our parentes & maysters (whome we ought to preferre as they whiche be the parentes of the wytte) syth that lorde of all / at what tyme he was of that depe wysdom that his parentes vnderstode hym not/yet he returned with them to Nazareth submyttyng hymselfe vnto them. we owe this to the naturall loue/we owe this to the reuerence towarde our parentes / that otherwhyles we gyue place to theyr wyl though we see better what is to be donc than they. But now it is good to see with howe mete an ende Luke hath concluded the chyldehode of Jesus. Et Iesus (sayth he) proficiebat sapientia, æta-

te, & gratia apud deum & apud homines. Jesus (ꝙ sayncte Luke) dyd further in wysdom / age / and grace with god and with men. Howe many thynges in howe fewe wordes hath he taught vs? Fyrste of all that with the growe and the encreace of age / the encrease also of holynes ought to be copled / leste that sayng be ryghtly spokē vpon vs which sayncte Augustyn spake vpon the com mon sort of men. Qui maior est ætate, ma ior est iniquitate. i. the greater in age / the greater in lewdnes. Or lest in this most goodly and fayer batell we shulde as any tyme reste vs and stande styll / or thynke that we haue wonne the fylde / but after the maner of them / whiche renne at a game neglectyng that whi che we haue lefte behynde vs / contende always and labour fourther vp / and alwaye assaye to clymē from good to better / from better to the best / tyll at laste it be come to the marke (that is to saye) to the ende of this lyfe.

Socrates what tyme he was very aged euen as though he knewe nothynge / so always he thursted to learne / and that

of any one. Holykewyse we the more we be in Christ / the lesse we shal please our selues if so be that we profyt in him truely / so that always the standyng in a mans owne concept is the very pestilence and vtter destruction both of studies and also of goodnes. And after Quintilian / the ouer typpe kynde of wytes cõmeth not lyghtly to thryfte neyther of lernyng nor goodnes / I thynke that the order also is not in vayne apud deum, & apud homines with god & with men. So that we ought to vnderstand that cheyfly & fyrst of all we muste apply vs that our lyf may please god / and if we do so / the fauour of mã shall folow alone. For nothyng is more fayer than vertue / nothynge more amiable / after whome prayse is accustomed the more to folowe / the lesse that it be coueted. with as fewe wordes as we myght we haue expressed vnto you (chyldren) an exampler & president of a chylde / whom we ought both to loue most / and folow most effectually. And surely so muche shall we seme to loue / as we shall folow hym. Agayne howe much the more ardently we shall loue hym / so muche the fuller

fuller we shall folowe hym. wherfore
let vs require this one thynge of hym
with dayly & pure prayers/that he wyl
graũt vs to bienne in his loue/to proue
lyke vnto hym/that is/chaste/pure/vn
spotted/mylde/symple/easy to be en-
treated/voyde of craft/ignorãt of gyle/
knowynge not what enuye meaneth/
obeysant to the parentes/obsequious to
the comaundemẽt of our maysters des-
pysers of the worlde/auowed to holy
thynges/attent and wedded to godly
letters/passynge our selues dayly in
goodnes/allowed of god/well accepted
among men/and by the sauour & smelle
of our good name alluryng very many
to Christ. These thynges(I say)conti-
nually let vs requyre/these let vs at-
tempt both with handes & fete/whyle
our age serue vs whiche wyll els flee
shortly away/for it Quintilian monys-
sheth a ryght sayngc. Optima statim ac
primo discenda.i. The beste thynges are
by and by and fyrste to be learned/I
praye you/what ought to be learned
soner than Christ/whiche is beste of all
thynges/nay rather what other thyng
ought a christian man to learne than

hym/whome to knowe is euerlastynge lyfe as hymselfe wytnesseth prayenge his father in the gospell/which thynge if we do / we shall as it were for our power yelde thankes and acquyte his kyndnes and singular goodnes toward vs/& in thus acquytyng hym/we shall wynne hym vnto vs. And the more fully we shall acquyte / howe much the more vehemently we shall reloue hym. So much the more we shal reloue hym howe muche the more we exercise hym in lyfe and manners. And the more we exercise hym/so much the more we shal be enryched in hym.

¶ The thyrde parte.

BVt in the meane whyle some perchaunce wyll thynke that this is an hard warfare to cast vp all and take the crosse with Christ/but let vs remembre(most derr brethern)that the nature of the worlde and of Christ is farre contrarye and dyuerse. The worlde as it were a paynted harlat at ye fyrst syght sheweth it selfe vnto vs amyable / and (as it were) golden. But after / the de-

per ye

yet ye entre in / and the more narre ye loke in / so muche the more and more / sowle stynkyng & bytter be all together Cõtrary wyse Christ / to thẽ yᵗ behold hym a farre of / he semeth sõwhat hard whyle we see crosses and the despysyng of pleasurs and of lyfe. But who that with a trusty & bolde hert casteth hymselfe holly vpon hym / he shal fynde nothyng softer / nothynge more at large / nothynge swetter. Oneles perchaunce he hymselfe beyng the very trouth speketh not the trouth in the gospel where he sayth. Colligite iugum meum super vos, & inuenietis requiem animabus vestris. iugum enim meum suaue est, & onus meum leue. Take my pocke vpon you (sayth Christ) and ye shall fynde reste to your hertes / my pocke is swete / and my burden is lyte. This vndoubtedly is the very harde way of vertue which in olde tyme longe before Christs commyng Hesiodus in maner dremed on / at the fyrst enteryng in and cõmyng to / sumwhat roughe and harde / but after one be a whyle entered / it is alwaye more and more easy and pleasaunt. But admitte it to be a very sharpe waye of

it selfe / I praye you howe can it seme sharpe sythe by it we go yᵉ way to so certayne & so greate a rewarde. If accordynge to the sayinge of the wyse man. Spes premii minuit vim flagelli. The hope of the reward doth minyshe the violēce of the scorge / who in this transitorie lyfe wolde not iudge it lyte and swete / wherby he getteth that heuenly lyfe / & which shal neuer forsake him to raygne eternally with Christ / to behold continually that hygh ioy & goodnes / to be conuersaunt in the cōpanye of aungels to be farre from all feare of euyls: who I praye you this so greate a rewarde wolde not gladly bye yea with a thousand deathes: and this so greate a stypend doth Jesus our captayne promise to his souldyers / whiche wyll not lye / nor can not deceyue. Now ponder with your selues the frutes / the eternite / and the magnitude and greatnes therof / agaynste whiche set the shorte tyme of this warfare whiche is no longer than yᵉ very lyf which lyf what is it els thā a vapor aperynge for a lytle tyme / or a slepe of one houre. But we go to / of this inestimable rewarde let vs a whyle be

styll/& let vs now see with howe abundantly greate rewardes our gyde and captayne recompenseth the labours of his souldyers also in this lyfe/& howe an onlyke harueste they repe whyche be souldyers of the worlde/and they which fyght vnder Christ Jesu. Let vs here what ye wycked men themselfes say in the boke of sapiẽtie. Lassati sumus in via iniquitatis & perditiõis, ambulauimus vias difficiles, viam autem domini ignorauimus. That is to say. we be wery in the way of iniquitie/and of perdition/ we haue walked harde ways/but the way of the lorde we haue not knowen. The worlde entyseth vs with his cloked & coũterfet shadows of goodes/whych be nothyng els but poysons couered with honye/ and by & by when we be onces plucked out of them & as it were put out of seruyce & forsaken/lorde god/into what cares/what thoughtes/ what troubles/ what losses/what dishonestyes/into what veration of the conscience of the mynde/into what wretched ende doth it bring the vnhappy persons: So that they myght seme to haue suffered penaunce ynough for theyr wyckednes/

though no hell shulde ensewe. But he whiche all the deceptes of the worlde reiected/fixeth his hole loue/care/and studie/vpon Jesus/that is/the hyghe good thynge/and hang holly on hym/ he accordyng to the promise of the gospell shal not onely possesse eternal lyfe/ but also shall receyue in this worlde an hundreth tymes folde so muche. And what is it to receyue an hūdreth tymes so muche? Verily for forged and counterfeited goodes/true/for vncertayne certayne/for transitorie eternal/for enuennemed pure/for cares quyetnes/for veration of mynde truste & confidence/ for troublesomnes tranquillitie/for losses profyte/for lewdnes goodnes/for the torment of conscience secrete and ineffable ioy/for a fowle & miserable ende a glorious and triumphant deathe. Thou haste despysed ryches for Christes loue/in hym thou shalt fynde true treasures. Thou haste reiected false honours/so muche in hym thou shalt be the more honorable. Thou hast neglected the affections of thy parentes/so muche the more tenderly wyll the true father cherysshe the/which is in heuē.

Thou

Thou haste set at nought the wysdom of the worlde/in Christ thou shalt much more truely be wyse/and more happyly. Thou hast despysed pestiferous pleasures/in hym shalt thou fynd farre other dygnities. Brefly to speake when thou seyst ones the secrete / and true ryches of Christ/the mystyclowde of the worlde dryuen in sonder / then all thynges whiche here tofore semed pleasaunte/ whiche dyd sollicite the / thou shalt not only not magnifie & haue them in admiratiō/but a certayn pestilēt destructiōs & poysons thou shalt flee/reiect/cast of. For it chaunseth wonderfully that so sone as that heuenly lyghte toucheth throughly our myndes / sodenly a certayne newe face of all thynges springeth forthe / so that it whiche a lytle to fore semed dulcet / nowe wareth tart/ whiche sower / wareth swete / whiche semed vnfarynge warethe amyable / whiche semed amyable wareth vnfarynge / whiche tofore gorgyous nowe fylthy/whiche myghty/ weake / which beautyfull defourme / whiche noble vnnoble / whiche ryche nedy / whiche hygh lowe/whiche gaynes damnage/

which wyse folysshe / whiche lyke deathe/ which to be desyred to be fledde/ and cõtrary wyse. So that sodenly the face of thynges chaunged thou wolt iuge it to be nothyng lesse than that which it semed before/ wherfore in Christ all good thynges be founde compendiously and truely of which the vayne and counterfet ymages and shadows / & as it were iogiynge castes / this worlde sheweth/ whiche the wretched cõmon sort of people pursueth and seketh with so greate trouble of mynde/ with so great losses/ with so great daungers / by ryght and wronge. I beseche you what blysse can ye compare with this mynde which is nowe free from errour / free from affections / without care / alwayes ioynge for the testimonie of conscience / vered with nothynge/ haut/ hygh/ and nert to heuen and nowe aboue the lot of man/ which in Christ the most hygh pyllar & rocke/ beynge borne & steyed vp / all the falsities of this worlde / the troubles/ frayes / & stormes depely laugheth at/ dispyseth / or rather reweth. For what shulde he feare which hath god his protectour: shulde he feare reproche: Nay

it is

it is an hyghe glorie to suffer reproche for Christ. Pouertie: nay the burdayn of ryches he gladly casteth awaye who so hasteth hym to Christ. Death: nay/ for that he most wysheth/wherby he is assured to be set ouer to immortall lyfe. For what thyng shuld he take thought whose father in heuē hath not so much but his heares numbred & told: & what shulde he couet which in Christ possesseth al thynges: For what is not common to the membres and to the hede: Now how great is mans not onely felicitie / but also dignitie to be a lyuyshe mēbre of the most holy body the church to be al one with Christ/the same flesshe the same spirite / to haue all one father with hym / in heuens / to haue Christe our brother / to be destinate with hym to the same enheryptaunce. And(shortly to conclude) to be no longer a man but a god: But hereunto / a certayne taste of the felicitie that is to com/which the good & vertuous mynd w perceyue and enioy euer among. This vndoubtedly saw/this felt ye prophete whā he saith. Nec auris audiuit, nec oculus vidit, nec in cor hominis ascendit, quæ parasti. Deus di-

ligentibus &c. i. Neyther eare hath herd/ nor eye hath sene/nor it hath not ascended into mans herte / whiche thou (o god) haste prepared to them that loue the. wherfore most dere companyons if we wyll do our deuour that we may be be truely the membres of Christ/accordynge to the sayngc of the prophete. Iustus vt palma florebit / the ryghtwyse man shal flower lyke the palme tre/yea also in this lyfe we shall spryng and florysche with a certayne perpetual youth/ not onely in mynde but also in bodye. For lyke as that flowzyng spirite of Iesu shall redounde into our spirite / so agayne ours shall flowe into his bodye/ and so much as may/it shalbe transformed into it. For this so greate beauty both of body and mynde can not beare the fylthynes of garmente. For our mynde is the habitation of god/the body is the habitation of the mynde/and the garment is as who shuld say in maner the bodye of the bodye. So shall it com to passe that all the hole man shalbe correspondaunt to the puritie & clearnes of the hede vntyll at laste/this lyfe fynyshed we be ledde awaye to euer-

tastynge ioy. ¶ The Epiloge.

GO ye to then / good felowes / to this so greate felicitie lette vs labour with our hole myght/let vs onely magnifie / and haue in admiration our captayne Jesu/then whom nothyng is greater/nay rather without whom nothyng is at al great. Hym onely let vs loue/then whō nothynge can be better/ nay rather without whō nothyng at al is good. Hym let vs folowe which one / is the true and perfyte exemplar of goodnes / without whō who so semeth wyse is a fowle. To hym onely let vs cleaue; hym onely let vs embrace / in onely hym let vs take fruition / in whō is the true pear/ioy/tranquilitie/pleasure / lyfe/immortalitie. what neadeth many wordes: he is the sum of al good thynges. Besyde hym let vs magnifie nothing/loue nothyng/desyre nothyng hym onely let vs studie to please. Lette vs remembre that vnder his eyes/ & vnder the eyes of his angels which shalbe our wytnesses in tyme compynge/we do al thyng what so euer we do. He is ialous nor cā suffre any fylthynes of this world wherfor let vs lyue i him a pure

A sermon of the chylde Jesus.

angelycal lyfe/let hym be to vs in hert/ in mouth/in al our lyfe. Hym thrugh let vs sauer/hym let vs speake/hym in maners let vs expresse. In hym let vs set our busynes/ our quyetnes/ioy/ solace/hope/all our trust and confidence. Let hym neuer departe from our mynes when we be wake/ and in our slepe let vs contynually dreme of hym. Hym let our lernyng and studie/yea and our playe and dyspoztes also sauer & smell of/by hym and in hym let vs encrealy and waxe tyll at laste we be growen vp to a perfyte man/ and our warfare valiantly brought to ende/we may kepe a perpetual triumphe with hym in heue.

A M E N.

¶ Thus endeth the swete sermon of the chylde Jesu made by the most famous clerke Doctour Erasmus of Roterdā.

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